



## **FAQs for Families:**

### **MARCH 11**

#### **What is the coronavirus, how does it spread, and what are the symptoms?**

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), is a new type of virus that was first identified in Wuhan, China. The virus comes from a large family of coronaviruses common throughout the world. They can infect people and cause mild respiratory diseases, like the common cold, and rarely, more serious disease.

The symptoms of COVID-19 can include: fever, cough, and shortness of breath. [Visit the CDC website](#) for more information about what coronavirus is, how it spreads, its symptoms, prevention and treatment, and what the public can do to stay healthy.

#### **What are the chances of getting coronavirus?**

As of March 10, the risk remains low in Wisconsin and Dane County. For current updates, please visit the [Public Health Madison Dane County Information and Status](#) website.

#### **What is the process for determining that an individual has the Coronavirus COVID-19?**

Schools and childcare programs are not expected to screen children, students, or staff to identify cases of COVID-19. The majority of respiratory illnesses are not COVID-19. If a community or school has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and follow up on next steps.

Someone with symptoms must be seen by a medical provider. If the medical provider determines the symptoms align with COVID-19, the medical visit is reported to public health. Public health will investigate the individual's symptoms before a full diagnosis is made and reported to the CDC for additional testing, where possible quarantine will occur until the individual is treated and cleared.

#### **What is MCPASD doing to help control the spread of COVID-19 (the Coronavirus)?**

MCPASD has communicated with families and staff multiple times regarding everyday preventative actions to help prevent the spread of germs. Staff and students are taking the following steps:

- Engaging classrooms in [regular handwashing](#), especially before and after recess, before snacks and lunch, and prior to computer use.
- Frequently wiping down surfaces with disinfectant wipes and spray products that are expected to kill the COVID-19 virus.
- Reducing numbers of items that need to be shared.
- Staying home when they are sick. District guidelines require students and staff to stay home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without any medication.
- Practicing good hygiene by following [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) guidelines and having tissues readily available.

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Over spring break, the MCPASD facilities services team will focus on extensive, proactive cleaning of our schools beyond what normally occurs.

MCPASD continues to monitor guidelines from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and collaborate with the [Wisconsin Health Department](#) and [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#) to inform decision-making and provide families and staff with additional guidance.

### **Does MCPASD have a pandemic plan in place?**

Yes, MCPASD has developed a pandemic plan according to guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and in collaboration with the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#) and [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#). The District's pandemic plan would only be put into action if instructed to do so by the CDC and Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

The Health Services Coordinator is monitoring information released by the CDC and Wisconsin Department of Health Services. As new information emerges, the Health Services Coordinator will update the MCPASD pandemic planning team. The team will evaluate and refine the pandemic plan as needed to ensure preparedness if further implementation is needed.

### **How does MCPASD determine when to implement the pandemic plan?**

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services ultimately provides our District with guidance on when to close schools and/or restrict individuals.

If there is a situation that directly involves COVID-19 concerns with a student/staff member, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services will contact MCPASD Health Services Coordinator with information and guidance on how to keep others safe. The MCPASD Health Services Coordinator would alert the pandemic planning team and implement plans as needed.

### **Does the District monitor attendance?**

School office staff and the health services department are monitoring for an increase in absences due to illness. Staff illness and absences are also being monitored. If you are calling your child out ill for the school day, please include specific symptoms so we can continue monitoring for patterns of illness. If large volume patterns are detected, we will consult with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and send out communication to staff and families following their guidance.

### **We are traveling over spring break, can my child return to school right away?**

To minimize the spread of illness, [Public Health Madison & Dane County](#) recommends all people postpone or cancel non-essential business and personal (including spring break) travel to areas with coronavirus. This includes both international travel to Travel Health Notice Level 2 and 3 countries with widespread illness and domestic travel to states with more than 10 cases. Please see [CDC's state report](#) website for the most up-to-date state level case information.

If travel is essential, Public Health recommends a 14-day quarantine upon your return from any of these countries or states. At this time, Public Health does not consider airport layovers to be

a risk. If there is a need to travel through a state with more than 10 cases via layover, minimize your stay within the airport.

### **Will school-sponsored spring break trips be canceled?**

On March 11, [Public Health Madison & Dane County](#) released new travel recommendations stating: We recommend people postpone or cancel nonessential travel to places with coronavirus. This includes both [international travel to Level 2 and 3 countries](#) with widespread illness and [domestic travel to states with more than 10 cases](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updates this information daily. If travel is essential, Public Health recommends a 14-day self-quarantine upon your return. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has more information about [how to self-quarantine](#).

Following their recommendation, all school-sponsored trips scheduled to travel to a state with more than 10 confirmed cases have been or will be canceled. As COVID-19 testing is now available in each state, it's likely the number of confirmed national cases will rise. Families should be prepared to make alternative plans should a travel location change to having 10 or more confirmed cases. The MCPASD staff member in charge of organizing the trip will be in contact with families regarding any cancellations.

### **Will school-sponsored summer trips be canceled?**

MCPASD will continue monitoring recommendations and will make determinations as we get closer to travel dates. Families who are not comfortable with their child(ren) attending these trips may choose for their child(ren) not to attend.

### **Do I need to inform my child's school if our family is leaving the state or country? Do I need to provide proof that I am traveling or keeping my child home?**

No, MCPASD does not require families to provide this information. Again, we ask that you follow the [CDC travel website](#) for guidelines on when to return to school after traveling.

### **If I keep my child home as a voluntary self-quarantine following a family trip, will the absences be excused?**

Families may excuse their child(ren) for any reason up to 10 days/year per Wisconsin law. Please communicate to your child's school administration and health office staff that you are following CDC travel recommendations to self-quarantine post traveling.

### **But what about the attendance letters I get?**

There may be some instances when student absences triggers an attendance form letter. Please know that while we are also mandated to address student attendance, the health of your child (and of others) takes precedence. If you have specific questions about an attendance letter, please reach out to your building principal.

### **If I keep my child home as a voluntary self-quarantine following a family trip, will instruction still be provided?**

If students stay home to self-quarantine and are feeling well, they are expected to participate in virtual instruction. Our Teaching, Learning, and Equity Department is developing a contingency plan for remote accessibility to class. Please contact your child's school for further information if applicable.

### **I hear in the news that schools may close, when would that happen?**

Our District is working closely with both the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and Public Health Madison Dane County. We will follow and adhere to their directions regarding closing schools.

### ***How does the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Determine when a school/school district needs to close?***

Public Health Madison & Dane County is currently creating plans for various levels of response, depending on case count and community spread. Included in this planning are thresholds/peak caseloads that would move us into the next phase of action, and specific recommendations to schools, businesses and health care systems for each phase. These plans are being created in real time, and have not yet been shared with the public. Right now we remain in Phase 1 (low community risk), which recommends school districts continue to work on updating our existing emergency operations plans and general germ prevention practices.

### **If school was closed for a prolonged period of time, would there be any plans for children to still be able to access education?**

Yes. Our Teaching, Learning, and Equity Department is developing a contingency plan for remote accessibility to class in order to support our students.

### **How will the MCPASD keep families informed with COVID-19 (Coronavirus)-related updates?**

The COVID-19 situation is constantly evolving and changing. As a District, we will continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates to staff and families as needed on any major changes that directly affect MCPASD.

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, we encourage you to visit the [CDC](#), [Wisconsin Health Department](#), [Public Health Madison & Dane County](#), or [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#) webpages.

You can call (608) 243-0587 to hear the latest updates from [Public Health Madison & Dane County](#) regarding COVID-19 and our community.

## **MARCH 12**

### **An individual living in our household just found out they were recently around someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, does my child need to stay home?**

As of March 12, Public Health Madison & Dane County shared that unless they are symptomatic, individuals do NOT need to self-quarantine related to **indirect** contact with individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. The individual who had potential direct exposure should practice social distancing from other household members.

*MCPASD strongly recommends families with specific self-quarantine related questions contact [Public Health Madison & Dane County](#) and follow their guidance.*

### **An individual living in our household is currently AWAITING testing results for COVID-19, does my child need to stay home?**

As of March 12, Public Health Madison & Dane County shared that unless symptomatic, family members living in the same household as a “person under investigation” do not need to self-quarantine. Families should practice social distancing from the person under investigation.

MCPASD strongly recommends families with specific self-quarantine related questions contact [Public Health Madison & Dane County](#) and follow their guidance.

**My child is missing school to be self-quarantine. What do I need to do?**

While MCPASD cannot require families to provide personal health information, doing so helps us make important decisions that impact the health and safety of others.

We ask that you please call your school's attendance line and provide the following information: Child's name, grade, state they are missing school related to being self-quarantined, why they are being self-quarantined (told to do so by health department, personal decision, etc.), when they may be returning to school, and if applicable, share information regarding being tested for COVID-19 and/or symptoms they are experiencing.

**What are you doing to limit access to schools in order to keep students and staff safe?**

On March 12, the District determined that non-essential activities are being postponed, canceled or rescheduled until at least April 12. Some of those activities include:

- Weekend use or rental of facilities by outside groups.
- Community usage of the MCPA Indoor Pool.
- All field trips, including those scheduled for next week.
- All-school assemblies.
- Daytime special events, whether in our schools or elsewhere, such as math meets and parent classes.
- Evening or weekend parent and community events.
- Wellness classes that take place in person.

The District will make a determination in early April on events after April 12.

The District is also requesting that visitors and volunteers refrain from coming to our schools until at least April 12. Exceptions to that include if you need to be at a school for a meeting or to pick up your child for an appointment.

**What are some of the activities, besides school, that can continue to take place?**

On March 12, the District determined that essential activities could continue. Some of those activities include:

- Sports that are in season, including practices and scheduled events. Teams must follow the WIAA guidelines, which currently include limits to the number of fans in attendance.
- Breakfast and lunch program.
- On-site after-school child care.
- Spring break child care.
- Before- and after-school clubs.